

case is the most fitting place for the location of the national headquarters, and calling on the Illinois members of the national committee to properly present the matter at its next meeting. Something can be said on both sides of that question. Chicago is much nearer the geographical and political center of the country than New York and equally as good a point to operate from, yet the latter city is much the most convenient to the doubtful States in the East and more accessible from the south Atlantic States. However, it is not a question of much importance, as a presidential campaign could be conducted without a national committee on either side.

DECLINE OF THE VETO POWER.

The surprisingly large vote by which both houses of Congress passed the river and harbor bill over the President's veto and the short time they were about it indicate a wide departure from early political methods. Perhaps it indicates that the presidential veto has, to a great extent, lost its former weight and potency. The power itself is an essential feature of the executive in any constitutional government. When the framers of the Constitution decided, after some deliberation, to vest the executive power of the government in a single head the question arose what relation the executive should bear to the legislative power. It was generally conceded that the independence of the executive required that he should be clothed with a negative of some kind on the acts of the Congress. The question was whether it should be a qualified or an absolute negative. The King of England had an absolute power of veto without being required to assign any reasons, and still has, though it has not been exercised for nearly two hundred years. A few members of the constitutional convention favored giving the President an absolute veto power, but this idea did not meet with much favor. It was decided to give him a qualified negative, and the matter finally took the shape in which it now stands, the President's veto of a measure to hold under-overscored by the two-thirds vote of each house. The provision in the Constitution which requires the President, in vetoing a bill, to communicate to Congress his reasons therefor, seems to have been made necessary by the one authorizing Congress to pass the bill over his veto, for otherwise Congress could not act intelligently. It shows, also, that the framers of the Constitution intended that both houses should give due consideration and full weight to the President's reasons for not signing a bill. The qualified negative upon legislation thus cautiously conferred on the executive was rarely exercised during the early history of the government. It was regarded by the early Presidents as a kingly prerogative, only to be asserted on extremely rare and very important occasions. It was also regarded with a kind of jealousy by Congress and the people. In later years, when it came to be more frequently exercised, a veto carried great weight, and the reasons given by the President for withholding his signature from a bill received great consideration. The passage of a bill over a veto was a rare occurrence. It has happened very few times in our history that Congress has exercised its prerogative of enacting into law a measure obnoxious to the executive, and no bill was ever so passed by a large majority as the river and harbor bill was a few days ago. The most decisive veto by which a vetoed bill was ever passed before was that on the Bland free silver coinage bill, which was passed over President Hayes's veto in 1878. The House passed it by 196 to 73 and the Senate by 46 to 9, but these majorities were small compared to those by which Mr. Cleveland's veto was recently rejected—230 to 60 in the House and 56 to 5 in the Senate. President Arthur vetoed a river and harbor bill not as objectionable as the one recently vetoed by Mr. Cleveland, and it failed to pass either house over his veto. The conclusion seems plain that the executive veto is losing its dignity, weight and potency. This may be partly because it has been used too often in recent years and partly to the growing aggressiveness of Congress. In the present case it may be due in part to the fact that Mr. Cleveland has no party and very few friends in either house of Congress. The tremendous majorities given in both houses against his recent veto were perhaps as much a "slap" at him as an endorsement of the river and harbor bill.

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This is an encouraging showing. It may be attributed in part to the influence of the Board of Charities, in part to the salutary effect of taking the charitable institutions out of politics, and in part to the better management of the two State prisons. There have been periods when those who have compared expenditures with the appropriations made by the Legislature have concluded that the managers of the institutions have held it to be a duty to expend all the money set apart for their institutions.

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